

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application, and reconsideration of (Paper No. 8). Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1-11 will remain pending in this application. New claim 12 is added. The newly added claim is fully supported by the specification and original claims. No new matter is incorporated by this Amendment.

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The drawings are objected to because Figures 7 and 8 are considered to lack the designation --Prior Art--. In response, Applicants submit herewith a Letter With Proposed Drawings Corrections and an amended version of Figures 7 and 8. The amended version of Figures 7 and 8 includes the --Prior Art-- designation.

The drawings were also objected to because they include reference sign 16 which was not mentioned in the specification. In response, the specification has been amended to include reference sign 16. Accordingly, the objection is overcome and reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection are respectfully requested.

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Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) are purportedly anticipated by Lee et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,711,815). The Office Action asserts that Lee describes every feature of the claimed invention. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Independent claim 1, from which claims 2-6 depend, describes a film-forming unit. The film-forming unit includes a division wall that surrounds a lateral side and a lower side of the stage. In addition, the film forming unit also includes a gap-forming member. The gap forming member has an inner peripheral portion arranged above a

peripheral portion of the object to be processed (placed on the stage) via a gap. This gap-forming member also has an outer peripheral portion that is arranged above the division wall via a (another) gap.

Lee neither teaches nor fairly describes the above listed features of independent claim 1 and thus can not anticipate the claimed invention. Applicants refer to Figure 16 of Lee wherein it is shown that the projection 71a of the side wall 71 is located outside the press ring portion 91. In other words, the outer peripheral portion of the press ring portion 91 is not arranged above the side (divisional) wall. Due to this difference in structure, the gap arrangement in Lee does not provide the advantage of allowing the purge gas to go around the surface of the wafer. Compare Column 10, Lines 15-25 of Lee with page 11, lines 5-35 of Applicants' specification where Applicants discuss the advantage of conducting the purge gas around the surface of the object to be processed. Hence, the structure of the device described by Lee is completely different from the device of the claimed invention. Furthermore, there is no suggestion in Lee to modify the press ring portion 91 into the gap-forming member of the present invention. Thus, as discussed above, Lee fails to teach each and every feature of independent claim 1 and can not anticipate the claimed invention.

In view of the above remarks, Applicant submit the rejection is overcome and request that it be withdrawn.

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Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly obvious based on Lee et al. in view of Eisuke (JP 09186095).

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly obvious based on Lee et al. in view of Asako et al. (JP 09316644).

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly obvious based on Lee et al. in view of Moslehi (U.S. Pat. No. 5,400,209).

Claims 10 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly obvious based on Lee et al. in view of Toshikatsu (JP 09260469).

These four rejections are addressed together as similar issues apply to all four. Moreover, Applicants respectfully traverse all four rejections.

The deficiencies of Lee are discussed above. None of the secondary alleged prior art documents remedies the deficiencies of Lee. None of the alleged prior art teaches or fairly suggests a film-forming unit which includes a division wall that surrounds a lateral side and a lower side of the stage or a gap-forming member whose inner peripheral portion is arranged above a peripheral portion of the object to be processed (placed on the stage) via a gap and whose outer peripheral portion is arranged above the division wall via a gap. Furthermore, none of the cited documents includes any teaching which would motivate one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teachings of the alleged prior art by including the above listed features of the claimed invention.

Hence, in view of the above remarks, the above four rejections are also overcome. Reconsideration and withdrawal of all four rejections are thus respectfully requested.

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Applicants respectfully submit that this Amendment and the above remarks obviate the outstanding objection and rejections in this case, thereby placing the application in condition for immediate allowance. Allowance of this application is earnestly solicited.

If any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17 are due in connection with this filing, please charge the fees to Deposit Account No. 02-4300; Order No.033082.121.

If an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is necessary that is not accounted for in the papers filed herewith, such an extension is requested. The extension fee should be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-4300; Order No. 033082.121.

Respectfully submitted,

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